

The wonders never cease

Birdwatching in Kosi Bay The wonders never cease

In December we were extraordinarily lucky while we were out canoeing with a Belgian guest on the river. The Siyadla river flows into the fourth and last of the Kosi lakes, furthest away from the mouth. When we describe it to our guests beforehand we call it our own Little Amazon because it is here that you will find the giant raffia palms, loved by the Palmnut vultures, and you can hike for hours under a canopy forest.

We were canoeing early afternoon on a cloudy day when suddenly we came round a bend and looked up to see a Pell's Fishing owl in a low branch five metres away from us. This was our first eyeful of this magnificent and elusive bird and naturally we made a big commotion and I had to back paddle so that we do not glide into the shore just below the owl.

The owl was not that startled but we were too close for comfort and flew up and to the top of the tree behind us. Now all I had to do was to manoeuvre our canoe back and we could spend hours looking and photographing this bird.

While positioning ourselves we heard a swoosh sound above our heads from a Palm Nut Vulture who promptly knocked the Pell's Fishing owl off the top of the tree. After a scuffle the owl disappeared into the undergrowth and that was the last we saw of it. The Palm Nut vulture flew back to the other side and continued its ravaging of a Raffia Palm, not realising our annoyed state. That is nature for you – both spectacular and capricious. Our guest did not know how special this sighting is but she just marvelled at our exclamations. I believe we will never see anything like that again but I am waiting for the next spectacular wonder to reveal itself.

Regards

Willie and Isabelle

Maputaland Bush Camp & Horse Safaris

Kosi Bay